

the thing she most needs is for people like you to tell other people they know, "I know this woman. She is a good person. She is a great public servant, and she ought to be the next Senator."

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:30 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to reception hosts Frank J. Biondi, Jr., and his wife, Carol; Republican Presidential nominee Gov. George W. Bush of Texas; and Franco Modigliani, recipient, 1985 Nobel Prize in Economics. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks on Signing the Oceans Act of 2000 in Martha's Vineyard

August 7, 2000

Save the bill! [*Laughter*] Another triumph for the Secret Service. Give him a hand. That was great. [*Applause*] Thanks.

Let me welcome all of you here and thank you for joining me today. I want to begin by just thanking the people of Martha's Vineyard for once again making all of my family, Hillary and Chelsea and I, feel so much at home. We love coming back to this place year after year. And in the years that I have served as President, it's meant more to us than I can possibly say, to be able to come here for refuge, to enjoy this beautiful, beautiful place, and to have the contacts we've had with our old friends and meet a lot of new people, as well. So I want to thank you for that.

This year, because of the year it is and the activities of my wife and the things that I have to do, our vacation is a lot shorter than it normally is. But I think it's a wonderful thing that we can do this today here on our last day. I want to thank the Coast Guard personnel for making this beautiful site available to us, in the shadow of this great old lighthouse.

I'd also like to mention a couple of people who can't be with us today that I want to pay homage to. The first and foremost is Senator Fritz Hollings of South Carolina. He sponsored the legislation that I am signing today, and he has been a champion of our oceans for his entire career. And Hillary and

I want to thank him. Hillary and I and the Vice President and Tipper Gore were all part of our Oceans Conference in Monterey 2 years ago, and it was a very moving event which led to the passage of this bill today.

I also want to acknowledge the contributions of a sometime resident of Martha's Vineyard, my friend Ted Danson, who has also been a great champion of the oceans and who was a part of our Oceans Conference—and, Mary, thank you for coming today—this is a good day for him, as well.

The secrets of the sea have forever captured the human imagination. We are drawn to the stories of exploration, navigation, and here in Martha's Vineyard, we're drawn to the tale of that not-so-little fish with the considerable appetite who was filmed here 25 years ago. [*Laughter*] After a quarter century, though, I think it's safe for us all to go back in the water, and Steven Spielberg said so.

I think it's important today to remember that oceans are more than a place for recreation. They have a central effect on the weather and our climate system. Coral reefs and coastal waters are a storehouse of biodiversity. They offer new hope for medicine and science. Oceans are also essential to our economy. Through tourism, fishing, and other industries, ocean resources support one out of every six jobs in the entire United States.

For more than 7½ years, Vice President Gore and I have worked to safeguard our oceans and our beaches. We've quadrupled funds for national marine sanctuaries, restricted offshore drilling, rebuilt threatened fisheries, protected coral reefs, and strengthened water quality standards along our coast to protect against pollution.

This year I sent the Congress a lands legacy budget that proposes record funding for ocean and coastal protection, and I hope Congress will pass it before they go home. But we must do more, and we must keep looking ahead.

Two years ago, on the Monterey Peninsula in northern California, we brought together scientists, conservationists, and business leaders for the first-ever Oceans Conference. I called on Congress to create an oceans commission to continue the important work we began there. Thanks to Senator Hollings,

we're following through on that commitment in this bill that I will soon sign, the Oceans Act of 2000, legislation to help chart a 21st century strategy for the protection and sustainable use of our oceans and coasts.

The legislation establishes a national Commission to improve our stewardship of the sea. Above all, this bill is about setting a vision to ensure that our beaches are clean, our oceans are protected, our coastal economies remain strong.

We know that when we protect our oceans, we're protecting our future. It is now time to do that. It's been more than 30 years since the last oceans commission, the Stratton Commission, laid the foundation for Federal oceans policy, which led to the creation of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. But the pressures on our oceans and coasts continue to mount. Americans continue to be drawn to the oceans. More than half our citizens live in a coastal area. Nearly half of all new development occurs along the coast. But we know better than ever that oceans have limits. They can be overfished, overpolluted. Poisonous runoff from the Mississippi River alone has created a dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico that is almost as large now as the entire State of Massachusetts.

These are some of the challenges to be addressed by the new Commission. But they will also look for new opportunities in our oceans, exploring ways we can all benefit from new technologies and discoveries. For example, in recent years, we've learned that blood from the horseshoe crab provides a vital antibacterial agent. And a potential anticancer drug may come from a deep-sea sponge. This is just the beginning.

There's no better place to sign this legislation than here, because of the longstanding link to the sea the people of Massachusetts have. The maritime tradition stretches back over 300 years. Marine research was pioneered in nearby Woods Hole starting in the 1870's. Now we build on that proud tradition as we launch a 21st century course for our oceans policy.

President Kennedy once said, "We are tied to the ocean. And when we go back to the sea, whether it is to sail or to watch it, we're going back from whence we came." By going

back from whence we came, we prepare a better future for our children. This is a good day for that, and I'm glad it's happening here.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:41 a.m. at the U.S. Coast Guard Station at West Chop Lighthouse. In his remarks, he referred to actor Ted Danson, president and cofounder, American Oceans Campaign, and his wife, actress Mary Steenburgen; and movie producer/director Steven Spielberg. S. 2327, approved August 7, was assigned Public Law No. 106-256.

Exchange With Reporters in Martha's Vineyard

August 7, 2000

Senator Joseph I. Lieberman

Q. What do you make of Gore's selection of Senator Lieberman?

The President. Well, first of all, this is a very important choice, and the Vice President is going to make his announcement tomorrow, so I don't want to comment on that. But I'll be glad to tell you what I think of Senator Lieberman. He's been a friend of mine for 30 years. I supported him when I was a law student at Yale, and he was running for the State Senate—he wasn't even 30 years old then—and I think he's one of the most outstanding people in public life.

I've worked with him for 15 years or more through the Democratic Leadership Council. He's a bold thinker. He's always full of new ideas, and he's supported the changes that we've made over the last 8 years that have turned America around and moved America forward. I think he's just an extraordinary guy. I like him. I know his family. I like his family members, whom I know. I just think he's an amazing person.

And we've talked a lot over the years about the Middle East peace process and every conceivable domestic issue. He's an extraordinary, extraordinary human being, as well as a longtime friend of mine. So I think he's terrific.

I think that the important thing now is—I know you'll have a lot of questions you want to ask me and everybody else, but I'd rather not say anything else today. Let's let the Vice President make his announcement